

A Page in a Book[®]

RECOMMENDING THE BEST BOOKS FOR CHILDREN & TEENS

By Paige Gardner Smith



IMAGINATIVE ANSWERS FOR KIDS

Children are simply the best at coming up with the answers they want, getting the results they desire using nothing but their imagination. Their imaginative powers are unbounded by the conventions and boundaries that tend to hamper our free-thinking as we age. A child's unlimited optimism in the face of obstacles shows in their artwork, their play and even in their responses to questions. Ask any three-year-old how they would get to a faraway place like China, and their imagination is likely to produce an answer as simple as "I'd just go." The following titles highlight the power of imagination to transport us, to find our answers and to get us where we want to be.

Dream Friends

By You Byun (Nancy Paulsen / Penguin Books for Young Readers)

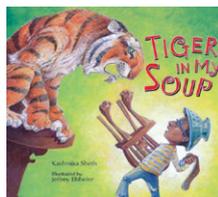


Melody has the best dream friend ever. When she sleeps, she and her enormous white cat-like friend can fly, dance and play

hide-and-peek, they can do anything they imagine together. But during the day, Melody has trouble summoning her dream-friend to keep her company in her new school, where she has yet to make a friend. Using the power of her imagination, she closes her eyes and practices a dance she learned from her dream friend. When a real voice chimes in "Is that a new game?" she opens her eyes to see another little girl who'd like to learn the dance. Supporting the idea that dreams are the inspiration for action, *Dream Friends* is a brilliantly illustrated window into the beautiful resource that is a child's imagination.

Tiger in My Soup

By Kashmira Sheth,
Illustrated by Jeffrey Ebbler (Peachtree)



When a young boy is left in the care of his teen sister, all he wants her to do is read his book about tigers with him. But she's got her ear-buds

in, groovin' in her own world, and doesn't want to take the time to read with him. After all, she's only supposed to make his lunch. But when she puts his bowl of alphabet soup in front of him, he suddenly spies a tiger in his soup! The tiger steams and swirls out of his bowl and his ordinary lunch quickly becomes a fight for his life (and lunch). His battle with the tiger draws his sister's help as spoons drop and soup gets cold. Will this play for attention get him the book time he's seeking with his sister? For the kids whose imagination roars for recognition, *Tiger in My Soup* is the recipe for required reading.

The Amazing Hamweenie

By Patty Bowman (Philomel / Penguin)



Hamweenie is a cat...who also is a star waiting to be born. In his mind, he's a famous magician-acrobat-entertainer

who is destined for fame and the adulation of children worldwide. He imagines himself in the spotlight center-stage, under the big top and with his name writ large across the sky as "The Amazing Hamweenie." But his dreams are hampered at every turn by his caregiver, a little girl who loves him with baths and costumes (balanced with treats and hugs). Convinced he is being alternately drowned and poisoned, Hamweenie bides his time looking for every opportunity to escape and find his destiny. But readers will find that his imagination is his best vehicle for escape – because his real captivity is the best life ever. This is a delightful title both for its droll humor and highly detailed artwork!